

Dear Senators,

Opposition to S.B. No. 366 and Raised S.B. No. 1063

I understand that you were looking for input from towns on the pesticide restrictions.

My name is Andrew and I represent the athletic coaches parents and athletes in the community of East Haddam. I am writing to express my concern and opposition for the portion of S.B. No. 366 and Raised S.B. No. 1063 that extends the ban of chemical treatments into the high schools and municipal fields.

We can all agree that the environment is a major concern. However, my immediate and primary concern is in student safety and legislation of this type can have an adverse effect on the increase of injuries to our athletes. High school fields require extensive use in order to implement a comprehensive athletic program. Prudent use of chemical treatments is necessary to allow maximum usage of those fields.

There have been several notable studies conducted as it relates to injuries caused by poor field conditions. Our state association has contacted an independent field testing lab, Sports Labs USA, which is contracted to evaluate the safety of all 31 NFL fields and they write– “In regard to natural grass fields: it is our opinion that the inherent safety and ability to prevent injury associated with these fields is directly related to the blade-density of the grass and the ability to properly maintain that density. It is also our opinion that it is not possible to maintain the density and growth, required for safe play, nor adequately defend the natural growth process against the impact of frequent athletic events, without employing significant chemical treatments and/or enhancements.”

Furthermore, in a 2011 University of Iowa study it is stated – “Field hardness increased the incidence of lower extremity injuries in football” and a study Penn State conducted in 1981 “20% of Injuries reported and treated for football could have been avoided if the fields were softer, better cared for and had less compacted soil” and also at Penn State in 2004 – “10% of concussions were caused by a head hitting the surface of the field.”

We are coming to the end of one of the worst winters in history for the frequency of storms. The State of Connecticut allows our cities and towns to apply chemical treatments to our streets and roads in the name of safety. We implore you to allow the same concern for safety to guide you in allowing the use of EPA registered chemicals on our athletic fields. The ban to S.B. No. 366 and Raised S.B. No. 1063 seeks will expose our municipalities and our state to litigation should a child be severely injured as a result of poor field conditions.

Additionally, since the July 1, 2010 K-8 ban, we have had problems with grub and tick populations, poison ivy taking over fence lines, planting beds and boundary areas as well as poor compacted athletic fields just to name a few of the problems. All of these issues present a hazard to students because the ban does not allow any EPA registered pest controls to be used.

There are enough failed attempts on record of using only organic materials to control these problems to prove it simply does not work. S.B. No. 366 and Raised S.B. No. 1063 would devastate high school athletic programs and increase injuries.

Sincerely,

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